

Virgin & B-F Team Up To Launch Virgin Vines

By Courtney Thompson

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Louisville, Kentucky-based Brown-Forman Wines has partnered with Richard Branson, chairman of the Virgin Group of Companies, to launch Virgin Vines, a wine they describe as "the wine that defies longstanding stereotypes to make wine fun and approachable." Available nationally in October, Virgin Vines made their debut at New York City's Olympus Fashion Week at Bryant Park, followed by an unveiling at Aer Lounge in the Meatpacking neighborhood.

"Wine, like life, is meant to be enjoyed," says Branson. "All the pomp and ceremony currently associated with wine just gets in the way of enjoying it. The Virgin brand is known for its irreverent and non-traditional approach to cultural and business practices and Virgin Vines brings the same attitude to wine. Our motto is 'Unscrew it, let's do it.' Enjoy wine as it was meant to be enjoyed—with fun and friends."

Virgin Vines is targeted at young adult consumers who are just beginning to discover wine, but are simultaneously turned off by traditional wine imagery and attitude. The 2004 Shiraz and Chardonnay opted for non-traditional advertising methods, with a campaign that is modeled after personal ads. The Shiraz ad reads: "Full bodied Shiraz desires hookup. No commitments, baggage or corkscrews. Where we're done, just toss me in the recycling bin or use me as a candleholder. I vote candleholder." The Chardonnay ad says: "Single white Chardonnay desperately seeks adventurous taste buds to join in soaking up life. Should be fun and able to appreciate the finer things. No snootiness or grape allergies. Check me out at the register."

"Virgin Vines takes a non-traditional and less intimidating approach to wine, making it engaging, fun and most importantly, approachable to consumers," says Don Freytag, Brown-Forman brand director.

The wines feature a painted label that wraps 360 degrees around the bottle and a **cork-free top closure called B.o.B.TM (Best of Both worlds)**. They retail for \$9.99 a 750-ml. bottle or \$8.99 a four-pack of 187-ml. bottles.